

April 2010

## Exercise Away Your Back Pain



**H**ow common is back pain? The majority of people in the United States will suffer from lower back pain at least once in their lifetimes. But **treating the pain can be complex** and is usually best done with advice from a physical therapist.

Some people may require surgery to treat their back pain. However, surgery comes with significant risks. After back surgery, you should follow a program of **structured**

**exercise** for at least six to eight weeks. Such a regimen can help

- **relieve pain and inflammation**
- **enhance mobility**
- **improve overall fitness**
- **encourage proper body mechanics**

But surgery may not be inevitable. Working with you and your physician, we can design an **individualized program** that can reduce back pain. Your program might include targeted abdominal and back muscle exercises, low-impact aerobics that do not harm your back and exercises to gently improve flexibility.

We can also provide advice on how to improve your posture and perform basic movements. These **simple changes** can help you prevent injury by teaching you how to stand correctly, lift without strain and sit properly.

Exercises to treat back pain are less invasive than surgery and do not require the downtime or intensive rehabilitation that often comes with a surgical procedure. In most instances, you will experience a major improvement that can help you **avoid the need for back surgery**. After six to eight weeks, your physician can assess your progress to determine a future course of treatment. To ensure that you get the pain relief you need, talk with us about the best exercise program for alleviating your back pain.

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## Returning to Action After Biceps Tenodesis



**T**he biceps tendon runs from the biceps muscle through the rotator cuff and into the shoulder joint, where it then attaches to the socket. If the biceps tendon becomes inflamed or irritated, a condition called bicep tendinopathy, you may need to **undergo surgery** called biceps tenodesis to relieve the discomfort.

Overuse of the tendon from sports, some occupations or other activities is the most common cause of bicep tendinopathy. Although it can develop slowly over time from wear and tear, bicep tendinopathy may also result from a direct injury. Causes of bicep tendon inflammation include

- **shoulder instability**
- **rotator cuff tears**
- **shoulder impingement syndrome**

The surgeon cuts the biceps tendon where it meets the shoulder socket and then reattaches it to the arm bone. This helps relieve the pressure from the cartilage rim of the shoulder socket by shifting the biceps tendon to a position where it **does not impede the movement** of the shoulder joint.

Physical therapy is vital to successful recovery. Your program will help you

- **increase muscle strength and range of motion**
- **protect the integrity of the repair**
- **regain proper function**

Physical therapy is also important to help avoid a “frozen shoulder” that has poor movement and functioning. Although your initial range of motion will be limited, we will slowly ease you into exercises that **enhance recovery** and get you back to your normal self.

Most people can begin a physical therapy regimen approximately three to four days following surgery. We will work with your physician to make your recovery comfortable and effective.

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## Hit the Links in Better Shape



**W**hether scratch golfers or weekend duffers, most players want to improve their game and lower their score. But maximizing your golf game means more than just practicing regularly. By increasing your fitness, you can play with **confidence and success**.

Your golf game depends on **balance and stabilization, endurance, strength and power, and flexibility and coordination**. To

ensure that you are in the best possible physical and mental shape to sharpen your game, we can develop a personalized exercise regimen that focuses on improving each of these factors. A personalized exercise program can help in the following areas:

- **Smooth your swing, increase your club head speed and extend your driving distance by conditioning and strengthening your muscles.**
- **Enhance your range of motion through flexibility exercises.**
- **Improve your agility and balance by toning your body.**

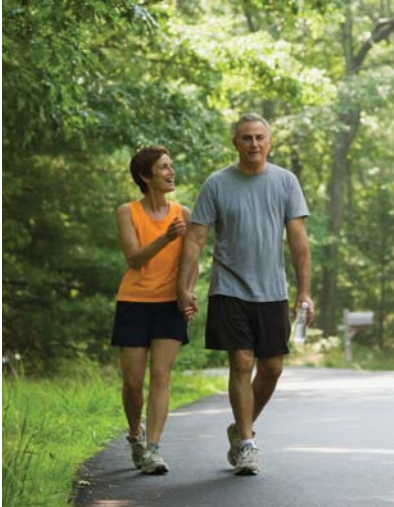
Maintaining fitness also helps to prevent golfing injuries. Lower back injuries are more prevalent in men. That means their injury-prevention program should focus on **strengthening the trunk and core muscles**. Women are more susceptible to elbow injuries. That means their injury-prevention program should focus on **improving flexibility** and **encouraging a stronger elbow** and **improved swing**.

In golf, as in all other sports, practice alone does not make perfect. To improve your game, your approach should include a fitness program that helps you achieve the body you need to withstand the rigors of practice and **reap the benefits** of your efforts.

Discuss with us your goals for improving your golf game and increasing the enjoyment of your time on the course. Together, we can find a **realistic fitness program** to make your game more comfortable and maybe shave some strokes off your score.

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## Strengthening Your “Heart” Following Angioplasty



**P**eople who have undergone angioplasty followed by stent placement generally have better blood supply to the heart muscle than do other people. That increased blood supply means that you should be able to participate in **more physical activity** than you did before the procedure. Not only is exercise safer than it was before your angioplasty but most doctors recommend it because of the benefits you can enjoy.

Exercise helps prevent the recurrence of the condition that led to the angioplasty in the first place. In addition, regular exercise helps you **sleep better at night** and keeps your blood pressure, cholesterol and weight at healthy levels.

Your doctor will give you specific instructions concerning when you can resume activity after angioplasty. Usually, you should wait at least two days after your procedure before standing or walking for any length of time. After that, you can begin low-impact exercise—for example, **walking for short distances**. You should find that you have more energy than before the procedure, because your cardiovascular function is better. Avoid vigorous exercise for 30 days.

Set goals. By the six-week mark, you could be walking two, three or even five miles at a time, depending on how fit you were before your angioplasty. Increase your time and distance slowly. Do not exercise so hard that you feel exhausted, experience chest pain or are unable to speak. Ideally, as you work out, **your heart rate will rise gradually**—then decrease as you cool down—and you will feel just slightly out of breath.

Besides the moderate fitness routines you already enjoy—walking, swimming, low-impact aerobic dance—we can suggest other exercises tailored to your specific needs. Anything from heel raises to arm lifts can help you **build strength and stamina** as you work into a healthier, fitter lifestyle.

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## Getting Into the Swing for Tennis Season



**A**nyone for tennis? If winter has you longing for court time, you can pump up your enthusiasm—and reduce your chances of injury—by starting a **fitness program** before you touch a racquet. And it is not just about your swing.

Effective preseason preparation includes a foundation of aerobic conditioning, strength training and skill drills. By increasing the intensity of your workouts over time, you

will progress to **higher-impact conditioning** gradually while avoiding serious injury.

One approach, called “periodization,” involves a three-phase, four-week program of gradual training:

- **Preparation phase (weeks 1 and 2): low-impact aerobics and light weight training**
- **Precompetitive phase (week 3): more intense conditioning and interval training, including more emphasis on tennis-specific skills**
- **Peak phase (week 4): actual play and skill drills, with continuing low-intensity strength training focused on tennis-specific areas of the body such as rotator cuffs, forearms and body core**

Training just your upper body is not enough. Your strength training should include the **trunk and legs** as well as the shoulders. Tennis gives your whole body a good workout, so be sure that all your large muscle groups are fit before you start playing competitively.

After a long winter layoff, even four weeks of training may not be enough to get you up to full speed every day. After building up gradually, consider **easing into the season** with one or two days of play every week for the first few weeks. Then you can begin to increase your frequency. Be sure to balance exertion with adequate rest, both passive (sleep and inactivity) and active (nontennis activities). Ask us for suggestions about **specific training activities** and strategies that will help you prepare for a successful tennis season.